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SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA

Letter dated 23 June 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation dated 18 June 1993 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 116 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

* A/48/50.

ANNEX

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation dated 18 June 1993

Recently adopted legislation and legislation under consideration by the Parliament of Estonia as well as decisions by local authorities have led to a serious aggravation of the situation concerning the Russian troops temporarily stationed in the Estonian Republic and have still further exacerbated the situation of the non-indigenous, particularly Russian-speaking, population.

It must unfortunately be pointed out that the worst fears are becoming reality: the authorities in Tallin are following a course aimed at confrontation. Estonia's admission into the Council of Europe has been perceived not as encouragement and an incentive to improve the situation of the population, but rather as a "blessing" approving the establishment of a monoethnic State in Estonia. After the adoption of the discriminatory law depriving the Russian-speaking population of the right to be elected to local self-government institutions, the Parliament of the Estonian Republic adopted on the first reading a draft law on aliens, which completely ignores the real conditions in the country and declares all non-nationals of Estonia aliens without residence permits, that is, essentially illegal immigrants. If this law enters into force, hundreds of thousands of Estonia's inhabitants will be deprived of social guarantees and doomed to political disfranchisement, and further obstacles will be introduced preventing them from acquiring the right to residence and work. There is no doubt that this will make the danger of internal conflict a real threat.

At the same time, unprecedented attempts are being made to put pressure on Russian servicemen. The Tallin City Council is taking a decision which declares as invalid all the grounds for residence there, including residence permits, for servicemen and employees of enterprises belonging to the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation. The city authorities intend to "organize the liberation of occupied apartments in collaboration with the police". A similar decision affecting Russian military pensioners and the members of their families was taken earlier in the city of Tartu.

These measures are being taken against the background of a toughening of the Estonian side's position in inter-State negotiations, renewed territorial claims on Russian lands, and increasingly frequent public statements by Estonia's leaders which are unfriendly with regard to Russia.

The confrontational course taken by Tallin and the artificial complication of relations with Russia are fraught with serious consequences not only for our countries, but also for the entire Baltic region. The responsibility for those consequences will rest fully with the Estonian side. This will also affect those foreign partners of Estonia who today are closing their eyes to the manifestations of aggressive nationalism in that country and are recklessly supporting Tallin's dangerous policy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation calls upon the authorities of the Estonian Republic to demonstrate prudence and State wisdom,

halt the further drift to dangerous confrontation with Russia and avert an inter-ethnic explosion in their country. We express the hope that all democratic countries and authoritative international organizations, the obligations of membership in which Estonia must unswervingly carry out, will speak out forcefully in this situation.